

*Miss Prism.* This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

*Enter Cecily from the house.*

*Cecily.* Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

*Miss Prism.* Cecily!

*Chasuble.* My child! my child!

*[Cecily goes towards Jack; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]*

*Cecily.* What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

*Jack.* Who?

*Cecily.* Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

*Jack.* What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

*Cecily.* Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? *[Runs back into the house.]*

*Chasuble.* These are very joyful tidings.

*Miss Prism.* After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

*Jack.* My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd. .

*Enter Algernon and Cecily hand in hand.*

*They come slowly up to Jack.*

*Jack.* Good heavens! *[Motions Algernon away.]*

*Algernon.* Brother John, I have come down from town to tell

you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future.

*[Jack glares at him and does not take his hand.]*

*Cecily.* Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

*Jack.* Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his

coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

*Cecily.* Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in every one. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid